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UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

NEETA THAKUR, et al.,

Plaintiffs,

v.

DONALD J. TRUMP, et al.,

Defendants.

Case No. 3:25-cv-4737

**DECLARATION OF SUSAN L.
HANDY**

DECLARATION OF SUSAN L. HANDY

I, Susan L. Handy, declare as follows:

1. I have personal knowledge of the facts contained in this declaration and, if called as a witness, could and would testify competently to those facts.

2. I am a Distinguished Professor in the Department of Environmental Science and Policy at the University of California, Davis.

3. I have served as the Center Director of the National Center for Sustainable Transportation since its founding in 2013. I previously served as the Chair of the Transportation Technology and Policy Graduate Group, the Chair of the Department of Environmental Science and Policy, and the Director of the Sustainable Transportation Center at UC Davis.

4. I earned a Ph.D. in City and Regional Planning from the University of California, Berkeley, in 1992. I obtained a B.S. in Civil Engineering from Princeton University in 1984 and an M.S. in Civil Engineering from Stanford University in 1987.

5. My research focuses on the relationships between transportation and land use, particularly the impact of land use on travel behavior, and on strategies for reducing automobile dependence. My recent work includes projects for the California Air Resources Board and Caltrans on methods for evaluating the impacts on vehicle travel of proposed land development and transportation projects.

6. I am the author of the book *Shifting Gears: Toward a New Way of Thinking About Transportation* published by MIT Press in 2023. I have also authored or co-authored dozens of articles, papers, and reviews on transportation and land use.

7. I also serve as an Associate Editor of *Transportation Research Record* and serve on the Editorial Board of numerous other journals including *Transport Reviews*, *Travel Behavior & Society*, *Transport Policy*, *Journal of Transportation and Land Use*, *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, and *Transportation Research*.

8. A true and correct copy of my curriculum vitae is attached as **Exhibit A**.

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The National Center for Sustainable Transportation (NCST)

9. As stated above, I am the director of the National Center for Sustainable Transportation at UC Davis. The NCST provides national leadership in advancing environmentally sustainable transportation through cutting-edge research, direct policy engagement, and education. The Institute of Transportation Studies at the University of California, Davis (ITS-Davis) leads the NCST, with partner centers at California State University, Long Beach; Georgia Institute of Technology; Texas Southern University; the University of California, Riverside; the University of Southern California; and the University of Vermont.

10. The NCST is a powerful coalition of seven outstanding universities across the country. It is a true beacon of American ingenuity, driving national leadership in transportation research, education, workforce development, and cutting-edge technology.

11. The NCST was established in 2013 after being selected in a national competition to serve as one of five national transportation centers as part of the University Transportation Centers (UTC) program administered by the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) under the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act. In 2016, the NCST successfully re-competed for the opportunity to continue serving as one of the DOT's national UTCs under the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act).

12. Many of NCST's studies target transportation challenges in small towns and farming communities, where good roads and access to jobs and services are essential to daily life and economic survival. One project developed practical models to measure the fuel use and long-term costs of transportation systems. Another effort focuses on keeping roads safe by combining the latest technologies with proven speed management strategies. NCST also supports American industry and supply chains by exploring better ways to move goods—including a project that looks at how to coordinate heavy-duty truck routes more efficiently. As another example, NCST research was crucial to the development of the Wallis-Annenberg Wildlife Overcrossing on US-101 in Southern California, a project that helps prevent deadly vehicle-wildlife collisions and saves lives—both human and animal. The NCST also developed the Induced Travel Calculator, a tool that gives transportation agencies the facts they need to make better calls on whether

1 highway expansions will actually reduce traffic—or just waste taxpayer dollars.

2 13. Since its founding, the NCST has been delivering results with timely, practical
3 research that has produced 356 reports and white papers, 163 policy and research briefs—which
4 make complex findings easy to understand for everyday Americans—and over 400 peer-reviewed
5 publications. Over the past decade, the NCST has hosted 416 events, both virtual and in-person,
6 drawing nearly 30,000 participants from government agencies, industry leaders, and the public.
7 Hundreds of students, from K-12 to graduate level, have taken part in NCST programs.

8 14. The NCST’s activities have had transformational impacts on the nation’s
9 transportation systems. Our work contributes to accelerated adoption of vehicles and fuels that
10 minimize greenhouse gas emissions, new approaches to infrastructure provision and systems
11 operation that lessen environmental impacts, and a shift towards modes other than driving so as to
12 reduce vehicle miles traveled while improving accessibility. These transformations help the
13 United States reduce its greenhouse gas emissions while reducing other environmental harms,
14 enhancing social equity, and supporting economic vitality.

15 15. The NCST has received funding from the DOT, the California Department of
16 Transportation, the California Air Resources Board, the California Energy Commission, the
17 South Coast Air Quality Management District, sources in the States of Georgia, Texas, and
18 Vermont, and private industry.

19 **The NCST’s 2023 Grants Awarded by DOT**

20 16. In 2023, the NCST was selected through a competitive process to continue to serve
21 as one of the DOT’s five National UTCs, addressing the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act
22 (IIJA) research priority area of Preserving the Environment.

23 17. Under the IIJA, the DOT awarded \$90 million in funding per year for the
24 competitively selected UTC programs, including an award of \$4 million per year for the NCST.
25 The NCST’s funding was awarded to promote research focused on accelerating equitable
26 decarbonization that benefits both the transportation system and the well-being of people in
27 overburdened and historically disadvantaged communities. The research activities were focused
28 on three critical domains: vehicle technology to accelerate lower greenhouse gas emissions,

1 infrastructure provision, and reshaping travel demand.

2 18. A true and correct copy of the February 21, 2023, DOT press release announcing
3 grant funding to the UTCs including the NCST is attached as **Exhibit B**.

4 19. In 2022, my colleagues and I at the NCST submitted a grant proposal to the DOT
5 to fund the NCST's research activities in the DOT Priority Area Preserving the Environment. The
6 application explained that the NCST's research activities would relate to electrification,
7 alternative fuels, air quality, and environmental justice. The NCST's activities would address the
8 pressing challenge of accelerating reductions in greenhouse gas emissions while simultaneously
9 enhancing transportation equity. The NCST would continue to produce research that supports
10 innovation in policy by informing legislation and regulation, and reforming professional
11 practices. The NCST would support four kinds of research activities, all aimed at matching
12 research to policy:

13 a. building tools to support policy making, including datasets, lifecycle
14 assessments, and predictive simulation models that support scenario planning;

15 b. developing policy elements, such as evidence-based standards, model
16 regulations, pricing strategies, funding strategies, and others;

17 c. conducting evaluation studies that assess the outcomes of policies using
18 techniques such as experimental designs and econometric modeling; and

19 d. undertaking basic research that provides a solid foundation for each of
20 these activities by improving our understanding of the transportation system.

21 20. As the director of the NCST, I was a principal investigator for this grant proposal.
22 A true and correct copy of this grant proposal is attached as **Exhibit C**.

23 21. On June 1, 2023, we received from DOT notice of Grant Award Nos.
24 69A3552344814 and 69A3552348319 awarding a total of \$4,000,000 per funding year, for five
25 annual allocations of funding. A true and correct copy of that Umbrella Grant Agreement and
26 Notice of Awards is attached as **Exhibit D**.

27 **Termination of NCST Grant Funding**

28 22. On May 2, 2025, we learned of the termination of all of NCST's DOT funding—in

1 effect the termination of the NCST itself—through a DOT press release titled “U.S.
 2 Transportation Secretary Sean P. Duffy Defunds Woke University Grants.” The press release
 3 states:

4 U.S. Transportation Secretary Sean P. Duffy today announced that the
 5 Department terminated seven woke university grants totaling \$54 million. These
 6 grants were used to advance a radical DEI and green agenda that were both
 7 wasteful and ran counter to the transportation priorities of the American people.

8 *“The previous administration turned the Department of Transportation into the*
 9 *Department of Woke. I’ve focused the Department on what matters; safety,*
 10 *making travel great again, and building big, beautiful infrastructure projects. The*
 11 *American people have zero interest in millions of their tax dollars funding*
 12 *research on the intersection of gender non-conforming people and infrastructure*
 13 *inequality or whether road improvement projects are racist. It’s time to inject a*
 14 *dose of reality back into our higher education system, and that starts with ending*
 15 *these wasteful and divisive grants,”* said U.S. Transportation Secretary Sean P.
 16 Duffy.

17 DEFUNDING TRANSPORTATION DEI & GREEN NEW SCAM GRANTS IN 18 HIGHER EDUCATION

19 The following university grants have been canceled:

20 University of California, Davis - National Center for Sustainable Transportation
 21 \$12M for “accelerating equitable decarbonization” research.

22 ***

23 University of Southern California - Pacific Southwest Region University
 24 Transportation Center
 25 About \$9M for research on how “the transportation system creates and
 26 perpetuates inequities.”

27 23. This press release is how I learned that all of the NCST’s DOT grants had been
 28 terminated. A true and correct copy of that May 2, 2025, press release is attached as **Exhibit E**.

29 24. Also on May 2, 2025, UC Davis received a Notice of Termination announcing the
 30 termination of Award Nos. 69A3552344814 and 69A3552348319 on the grounds that the awards
 31 are inconsistent with current DOT priorities. The termination letter states:

32 DOT’s priorities presently include:

- 33 • promoting traditional forms of energy and natural resources to the
- 34 greatest extent possible,
- 35 • ensuring that taxpayer dollars are used efficiently in ways that maximally
- 36 benefit the American people and improve their quality of life, and
- 37 • ceasing to promote divisive diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives

that discriminate on the basis of race, national origin, or another protected characteristic.

Having individually reviewed your grant in light of DOT's priorities, the Office of the Secretary has determined that your grant is inconsistent with the priorities listed above. Specifically, your Consortium named on the application, the National Center for Sustainable Transportation, submitted an application in response to the FY22 University Transportation Center Notice of Funding Opportunity that serves as the grant's Statement of Work (SOW) and is incorporated into the grant agreement. The NCST addresses "accelerating reductions in greenhouse gas emissions while simultaneously enhancing transportation equity." NCST's objectives "to prioritize disadvantaged communities," "reduce impacts associated with infrastructure...for disadvantaged populations," and "support a Transportation Equity and Environmental Justice Advisory Group" are inconsistent the DOT's priority to cease promoting DEI initiatives that discriminate on the basis of race, national origin, or another protected characteristic. C2SMARTER's [sic] promise to "investigate MBUF long-term equity impacts," "adopt a quantitative equity screening component," and "build interactive workshops on transportation equity" is similarly inconsistent with this priority. Its EV work ("equity of access to electric vehicles and charging infrastructure") promotes discriminatory considerations and "green new deal" principles, inconsistent with DOT's priorities. The SOW's cited work is inconsistent with DOT's priorities. Because your grant "no longer effectuates ... agency priorities," 2 CFR § 200.340(a)(2), the Office of the Secretary is terminating your grant.

25. The Notice of Termination apparently refers to the research activities of another DOT grantee, C2SMARTER, in purporting to explain the reasons for the termination of NCST's grants.

26. A true and correct copy of the Notice of Termination is attached as **Exhibit F**.

27. UC Davis submitted an appeal of the award terminations on June 2, 2025. The campus has, as yet, received no response to the appeal.

Pacific Southwest Region University Transportation Center (PSR UTC)

28. The Pacific Southwest Region University Transportation Center is a regional UTC funded by the DOT. Established in 2016, the PSR UTC is led by the University of Southern California and includes nine research partner universities, including the University of California, Berkeley, the University of California, Davis, the University of California, Irvine, and the University of California, Los Angeles.

29. I am the Principal Investigator on Subaward No. SCON-00005220 funded through PSR UTC's DOT Grant No. 69A3552348309. The subaward was for \$245,000 for a budget

1 period of June 1, 2023, through May 31, 2024; subsequently amended on July 1, 2024, to provide
 2 the second annual allocation of funding in the amount of \$240,734.55, and to extend the
 3 subaward end date to May 31, 2025. A true and correct copy of the Subaward Agreement is
 4 attached as **Exhibit G**.

5 **Termination of PSR UTC Grant Funding and Subaward**

6 30. The May 2, 2025, DOT press release announcing the termination of NCST's
 7 grants also announced the termination of PSR UTC's grants. *See Exhibit E*.

8 31. On May 5, 2025, UC Davis's Sponsored Programs Office received a stop work
 9 notification relating to Subaward No. SCON-00005220. Attached to the email was the
 10 termination letter the University of Southern California received from DOT, terminating PSR
 11 UTC's Grant No. 69A3552348309.

12 32. The language of this termination letter is similar to the language in the letter
 13 terminating NCST's grant funding. The PSR UTC termination letter states:

14 DOT's priorities presently include:

- 15 • promoting traditional forms of energy and natural resources to the
 16 greatest extent possible,
- 17 • ensuring that taxpayer dollars are used efficiently in ways that maximally
 18 benefit the American people and improve their quality of life, and
- 19 • ceasing to promote divisive diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives
 20 that discriminate on the basis of race, national origin, or another protected
 21 characteristic.

22 Having individually reviewed your grant in light of DOT's priorities, the
 23 Office of the Secretary has determined that your grant is inconsistent with the
 24 priorities listed above. Specifically, your Consortium named on the application,
 25 the Pacific Southwest Region University Transportation Center (PSRUTC),
 26 submitted an application in response to the FY22 University Transportation
 27 Center Notice of Funding Opportunity that serves as the grant's Statement of
 28 Work (SOW) and is incorporated into the grant agreement. The PSRUTC
 promotes equitable access and furthers research themes regarding "uneven
 transportation access across PSR's enormously diverse region, particularly among
 transportation-disadvantaged travelers and communities." PSRUTC's research
 priorities that "deepen commitments to diversifying the transportation workforce;
 draw a more diverse pool of students; and focuses on Equity" are inconsistent
 with DOT's priority to cease promoting DEI initiatives that discriminate on the
 basis of race, national origin, or another protected characteristic. Furthermore,
 PSRUTC's EV statement ("perspective on equity in the transition to electric
 vehicles") and environmental justice themes ("addressing EJ problems in the
 goods movement system") promote discriminatory consideration and "green new

1 deal” principles that are inconsistent with DOT’s priorities. The SOW’s cited
 2 work is inconsistent with DOT’s priorities. Because your grant “no longer
 3 effectuates ... agency priorities,” 2 CFR § 200.340(a)(2), the Office of the
 Secretary is terminating your grant.

4 33. A true and copy of the stop work notification enclosing the PSR UTC termination
 5 letter is attached as **Exhibit H**.

6 **Harm Suffered from Termination of NCST Grant Funding**
 7 **And PSR UTC Subaward Termination**

8 34. I and my collaborators at NCST and PSR UTC have suffered immediate harm as a
 9 result of the cancellation of our grants and the defunding of our research centers. Specifically:

10 a. I and the 77 other researchers funded by these grants at the time of
 11 cancellation have been forced to significantly slow both research progress and dissemination. As
 12 of the terminations of the grants, 79 research projects were in progress and may not be completed.
 13 Rather than taking on pressing research questions, much of my own time and that of my fellow
 14 researchers has been taken up writing grant applications to replace the lost funding. We have lost
 15 both time and funding needed to travel to meetings and conferences to disseminate our research.

16 b. The researchers on these grants have had to lay off or find new sources of
 17 funding for more than 40 graduate and undergraduate research assistants who were employed on
 18 research projects funded by these grants. Researchers have been unable to make employment
 19 offers to graduate and undergraduate research assistants or to postdoctoral fellows for the coming
 20 year. This not only has slowed our research progress, it has also ceased our training of these
 21 young scholars.

22 c. Loss of grant funding similarly threatens our ability to retain support staff,
 23 who are essential to continuity of research and are budgeted in this grant as a direct cost. The loss
 24 of grant funding resulted in the loss of the equivalent of nearly 5 full time staff positions at UC
 25 Davis alone. The reduction in staffing is severely limiting the active dissemination of findings
 26 from completed projects to agencies, industry, and the public.

27 d. Loss of grant funding threatens the overall research and teaching
 28 operations of UC Davis, which relies on federal funding to further its educational and scientific

1 purposes.

2 35. These personal and financial harms are ongoing. Nearly 10 percent of my annual
3 compensation was lost this calendar year due to grant terminations.

4 36. These harms are in addition to the loss of value to the public from the research
5 funded by these grants. The grant terminations put an end to research that is critical to ensuring
6 the environmental and financial sustainability of the nation's transportation system and enhancing
7 its ability to serve the needs of the U.S. population.

8 **Role of Class Representative**

9 37. I am ready to assume the responsibilities of serving as a class representative. I
10 understand that I must stay informed regarding developments in the lawsuit, communicate
11 regularly with my attorneys, and act in the best interests of the class. I have no conflicts that
12 would prevent me from assuming this responsibility.

13 38. I have been in communication with other UC researchers, who would be members
14 of the class, who have suffered the same general type of harm as I describe above, from the
15 abrupt termination of their previously approached research grants. This harm is widespread and I
16 believe it will only increase in scope and impact if classwide relief is not granted.

17 I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California and the United
18 States that the foregoing is true and correct.

19 Executed this 17th day of July, 2025, in Davis, California.

20 Signed by:

21 *Susan L. Handy*

22 13E18548F6CA40D...

23 Susan L. Handy